

A decorative rectangular border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, enclosing the title and dates.

THOMAS YOUNG CROWELL

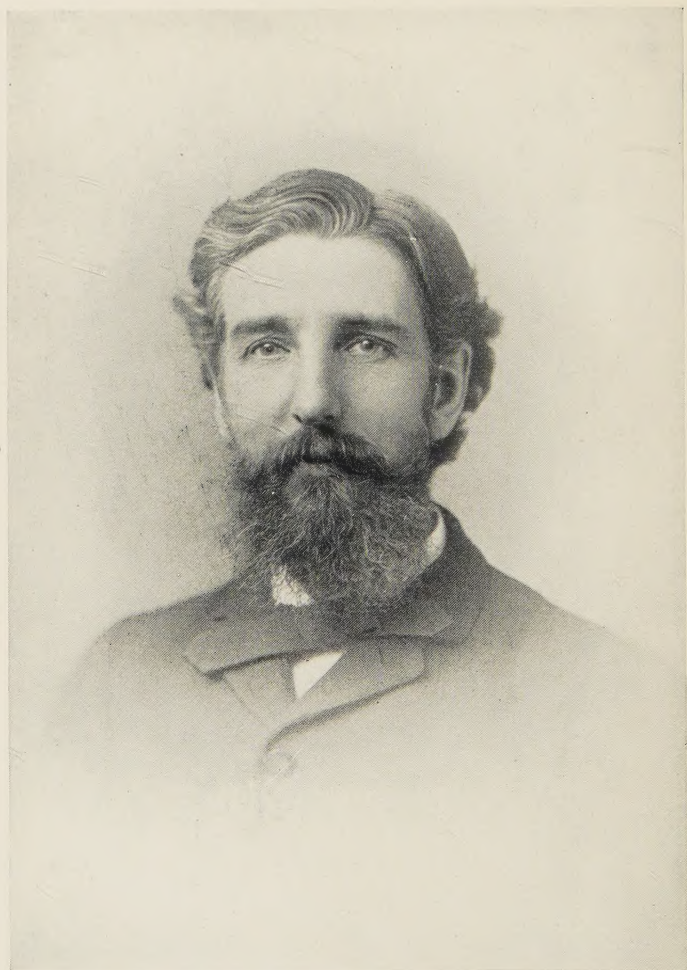
1836-1915

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

THOMAS Y. CROWELL



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Thomas Henry Crowell

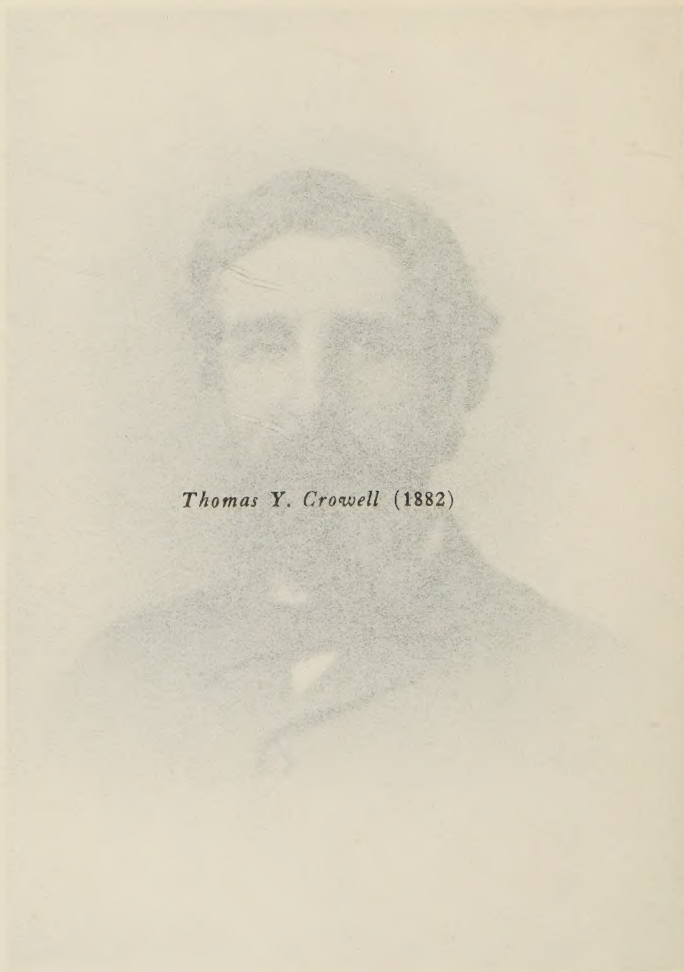
1875 - 1917

Thomas Y. Crowell (1883)

NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

1920



Thomas Y. Crowell (1882)

Thomas Young Crowell

1836 - 1915

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
1926

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"

*Printed in the United States of America
for Private Distribution*

*This little book commemorates
the fiftieth anniversary of
Thomas Y. Crowell's entry into
the book publishing business.*

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THOMAS Y. CROWELL

THOMAS Y. CROWELL

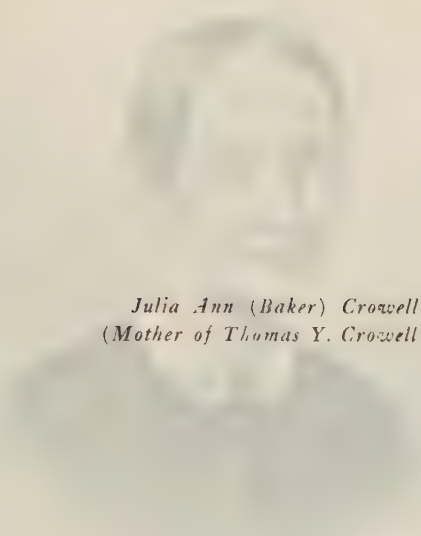
Thomas Young Crowell was born on the 29th of May, 1836, in West Dennis, Barnstable County, Massachusetts. His mother, who was thirty-two years old at the time, was Julia Ann, daughter of Crowell Baker. His father, Levi Crowell, then forty-three, was a native of Dennis and a descendant of John Crow, one of the first settlers on Cape Cod.

The original family name was Crow, or Crowe, which became Crowel, and finally, about two hundred years ago, took its present form, although the second syllable was not always pronounced.

John Crow who came from England or Wales, settled first in Charlestown, in 1634. Four years later, he sold his lands and removed to that part of the Old Colony, or New Plymouth, called Cape Cod. Of this seagirt peninsula, and its first settlers, John Fiske says: "As early as 1602 Bartholomew Gosnold with thirty-two men had landed on the headland which they named Cape Cod, from the fish found thereabouts in great numbers. This was the first English name given to any spot in that part of America, and, so far as known, they were the first Englishmen that ever set foot there."¹

Captain John Smith, who explored the New England Coast in 1614, gave the name "Cape James" to the point discovered by Gosnold, and Cape Cod

¹ "The Beginnings of New England," 1889.



Julia Ann (Baker) Croswell
(Mother of Thomas Y. Croswell)



Bay is given as "Stuart's Bay" in his famous map of New England.

The following picturesque description is given by Thoreau: "Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts; the shoulder is at Buzzard's Bay; the elbow or crazy-bone at Cape Mallebarre; the wrist at Truro, and the sandy fist at Provincetown. . . . [It] extends from Sandwich eastward thirty-five miles and thence north and northeast, thirty more, in all sixty-five, and has an average breadth of five miles. In the interior, it rises to the height of two hundred, and sometimes perhaps three hundred feet above the level of the sea. . . . It is composed almost entirely of sand, even to the depth of three hundred feet in some places." ²

² "Cape Cod," 1865.

John Crow settled at Mattakeset (or Mattachiest) afterwards called Yarmouth. The founder of the family was one of the original grantees in 1639 of the new town of Yarmouth (from which the town of Dennis was set off in 1793) and he filled a conspicuous place in the early history of the Cape. His name is mentioned frequently in the Old Colony records in connection with the division of lands, and the extinguishment of Indian titles. In 1640 he was admitted a freeman of the colony, and appointed an associate magistrate by the Old Colony Court "to hear and determine all causes and controversies within these townships now existing in Cape Cod, not exceeding twenty shillings."

From this original Cape Cod stock descended Levi Crowell, the father of Thomas Y. Crowell. Levi was born in 1793, and, in 1823, married Julia Ann Baker, who was his third wife. Like most Cape Cod men, he took to the sea and at the time of his marriage was engaged in building a small schooner of sixty-five tons, which he named the *Julia Ann*, after his new wife. In this vessel he sailed between New York, Boston and Portland. Deciding, however, to "cast an anchor to windward," a few years later, in 1831, he built an addition to his house, in which he started the first general store in West Dennis. He purchased his groceries and dry goods in New York, and his wife ran the store during his absence. The venture proved so successful that, long before Thomas was

born, his father had given up the sea, and was devoting all his time to his rapidly increasing business on dry land.

The Crowell store attracted customers from Yarmouth, Brewster, Chatham and elsewhere, so much so, that it was not an infrequent sight to see ten or more teams waiting in line before breakfast. The women, who often came with their husbands, would use the family kitchen, with its big open fireplace, as a waiting room, and chat until their husbands' business had been concluded. And doubtless they were in no hurry to leave.

In addition to the store, a wharf with a three-story warehouse was soon found necessary; and these were erected on an accessible location on Bass River. The two lower floors were used for the storage of flour, grain and provisions,

Birthplace of Thomas Y. Crowell

his father had given up the sea, and was devoting all his time to his rapidly increasing business on deck.

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GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

two lower stories were used for the storage of their goods and provisions,



while the upper one was occupied by sail-makers who made and repaired sails for the fishing schooners which laid up at the wharf during the winter.

Levi Crowell also owned a small fleet of lighters, or scows, which were used for transporting goods from the schooners anchored outside Bass River, to the wharf. An important part of the business was the fitting out of fishing schooners and the furnishing of supplies to the families of the crews, while the vessels were away on their trips. The salted fish were unloaded from the vessels, anchored outside of Dogfish Bar, into the scows, brought up the river to the Crowell wharf, then carted up the hill and laid on "flakes" to dry. When thoroughly cured, the dried fish were shipped to New York for sale. Every fall, the profits of the fishing

season were calculated, and divided among the owners of the vessels and the members of the crews. It sometimes happened that the season was unprofitable, and the fishermen's shares were not enough to liquidate their debts to Levi Crowell, in which case he would carry them through the winter and until the next settlement.

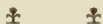
According to local records: "Success attended his every enterprise. . . . Having a natural tact for business, and a strong and active mind, his business naturally accumulated upon his hands, till in a few years it was found that more people were engaged in his service both by sea and land, and a greater capital wielded by him in trade, than by any other individual in the town. Indeed, no man since the first settlement

of this town had ever done so much business in so short a time.”³

Levi Crowell was drowned in shallow water by reason of a fall from his wharf on the evening of November 5, 1836. The fall stunned him and made it impossible to save himself. His death was deeply felt by the whole community, as is shown by the high tribute paid to him by John Sanford, pastor of the Congregational Church in South Dennis. “A man of distinction has fallen among us. . . . Levi Crowell was an honest man. . . . He was the friend of the poor man, not only by giving him employment, but by frequently bestowing upon him that kindness for which he expected no reward. Others from small beginnings, through his in-

³ John Sanford, Sermon, 1837.

strumentality, have acquired a competence. He was a liberal supporter of the institutions of the gospel. Whether his aid was required in the erection of a new home of worship, or in defraying the expenses of the ministry, it was promptly afforded. . . . He spared nothing that was necessary to the comfort of all who dwelt within his doors. The hospitalities of his table were received by many that had occasion to call at his house.”⁴



His untimely death occurred only a few months after his son Thomas was born. The widow was thus left with three small boys: Levi, aged nine; Howes, aged two; and Thomas, the subject of this sketch, a babe of six months.

⁴ John Sanford, Sermon, 1837.



South Dennis Congregational Church
(Rebuilt 1837-8)



The business left by her husband was gradually disposed of, and Mrs. Crowell devoted herself to her children, remaining in the house which her husband had built in 1829, on lands acquired from his uncle, Elisha Crowell, and his father, Thomas Crowell. The house is still standing on what is now known as Church Street, and has a pleasant view of Grand Cove to the east, with South Dennis and the Congregational meeting-house in the distance. It is reached by a bridge near by.

Mrs. Crowell was a woman of natural refinement, combined with deep spirituality, and she brought up her sons to appreciate the fundamentals of character and right living. It was a puritanical home in which the Sabbath (which really began at six o'clock Sat-

urday night) was rigidly kept, and the Scriptures were interpreted almost literally; but there was no trace of gloom in Thomas's childhood. It was also a thrifty home. The family cash book for 1853, which has survived, shows an income of about one thousand five hundred dollars, with total expenditures of about five hundred dollars for that year. So the boys grew up in comparative plenty, with access to books, and surrounded with most of the primitive comforts of that day and place. The yellow candles were fast being replaced by oil lamps. The tinder boxes and spinning wheels were finding their resting places in attics; and the days of brick ovens and warming pans were numbered.

Hundreds of skippers "hailed" from

Cape Cod, and West Dennis was a village of sea captains. Their neat story-and-a-half houses presented a prosperous appearance. Each one had its parlor, seldom used, containing coral, shells, and curios from foreign lands. In the great storm of October, 1841, West Dennis lost twenty-six of her citizens, a great proportion for a small village.

Outside of shipping and fishing, the only local industries of importance were ship-building, and the evaporation of salt. A few vessels were built every year on Bass River, for trade and fishing, but only small ones were constructed, on account of the sand bar at the mouth of the river, which prevented the passage of vessels of deeper draught.

During the boyhood of Thomas Crowell, the picturesque wooden wind-mills which pumped the salt water into vats could be seen in every direction. Bass River was lined with "salt works," and his grandfather, Thomas Crowell for whom he was named, owned a plant located on Grand Cove. It is estimated that at one time about two million dollars was invested in salt works on Cape Cod, but it was later found that evaporated salt could not compete with imported and western salt, and the industry became unprofitable, fell into decay, and was abandoned.

Thomas Crowell was a healthy, normal boy, mischievous, but not vicious, and fond of reading. There are several amusing stories in existence regarding some of his pranks. One of his

Grand Cove from the rear of Thomas Y. Croswell's birthplace

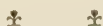




“chores” was to assist in the care of the vegetable garden, but often when the sun was hot he would disappear. His irate elder brother would then institute a search and usually found Thomas stretched at full length in a cool spot reading a book.

There was then, and is now, an abundance of sea food on the Cape, and keeping the larder supplied was an interesting chore for an active boy. The deep water supplied many varieties of fish and the “cove” covering seventy acres was a famous place for salt-water eels and crabs. Clams were easily dug on the shores, and “dipping” herring in the small streams in the running season was exciting sport. The herring were afterwards hung on long sticks and smoked. According to all accounts,

the youthful Thomas was always on hand at clam-bakes, parties, and Fourth of July celebrations.



The boy's schooling began in the "little red school house," and was continued in the "academy" at West Dennis. They were the typical schools of that time, where unruly boys were flogged, and teachers were often cruel. One of the teachers was particularly expert at throwing a heavy ruler, which the unfortunate culprit, who was the target, was compelled to retrieve.

His "education" was concluded by a term or two at the Academy in Yarmouth, an old ship-building port on the Maine coast. He was about fourteen when he entered Yarmouth Academy. At that time the railroad, known then

as the "Cape Cod Railroad," went only as far as Sandwich, so that an additional ride of about twenty miles by stage was necessary for West Dennis people in order to reach their destination. It was therefore quite an undertaking, especially for a boy of fourteen, to go from his home to Yarmouth, Maine, with the change to packet or railroad at Boston. A cheaper but sometimes uncertain way of travelling was by the "Boston Packet" which sailed from the northern side of the Cape at irregular intervals. On his first trip, the young traveller was accompanied by his brother Howes, who was two years older than Thomas. The boys spent an anxious night and awoke frequently to feel for the pocket-book which they had taken to bed with them for safe keeping.

The establishment of "North Yarmouth Academy" was brought about by a desire on the part of the inhabitants of the town of North Yarmouth to have a school in which the "youth of both sexes might have an opportunity of receiving a better education than the common town schools generally afford." A charter was obtained in 1814 and two extensive grants of land from the state laid the foundation for its support. In 1836, the school was divided into two departments, one "Classical" and the other "English." At this time it had two preceptors: Allen H. Weld, author of the well-known "Weld's Latin Lessons," and Nathan Dole, father of Nathan Haskell Dole, a well-known writer and translator, who later became Thomas Y. Crowell's literary adviser

after he became a publisher, and acted in this capacity for many years.

There were one hundred fifty-four students in the academy during its "golden age"; and from 1837 to 1850, inclusive, one hundred forty graduates went to Bowdoin College alone, while others entered Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and Colby. Many sea captains brought sons of wealthy foreigners, especially from Cuba, to receive their education at Yarmouth. Among its graduates were John A. Andrew, Governor of Massachusetts, General Oliver O. Howard, Leonard Swett, Lincoln's friend and confidant, and William Willis, historian.⁵

The first buildings were of wood, but,

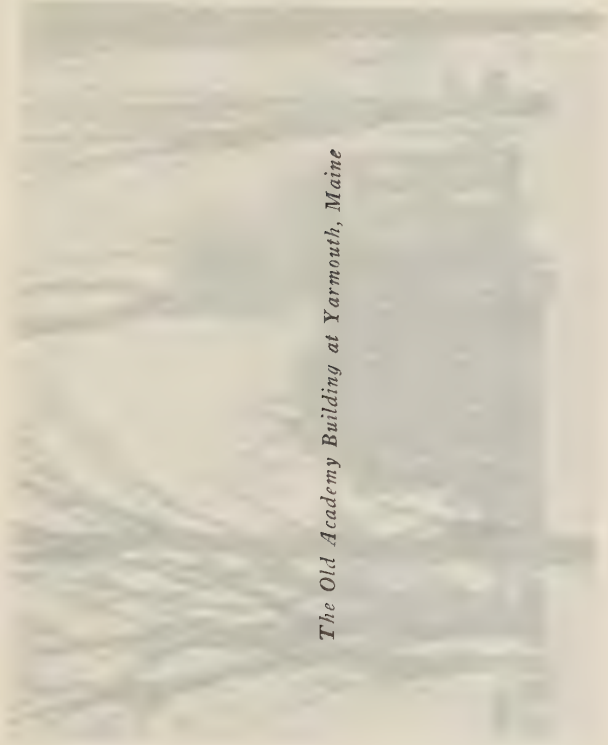
⁵ Letter of William H. Rowe, Town Clerk of Yarmouth, Maine, 1925.

in 1842, a new brick building was completed, and a few years later the first academy building was replaced by "Academy Hall" which is still standing.

At a later period of his life, Mr. Crowell visited Yarmouth and took a good deal of pleasure in looking up his old dormitory and the room which he occupied during his brief stay as a student. General Oliver O. Howard was a student at Yarmouth a few years before he entered, and has recorded his impressions of the school Commons in his "Autobiography" as follows:

"The room was small and the Commons a building poorly furnished from bottom to top. In the basement were the kitchen and the dining room. At the first meal I found myself at a long table, serving a "mess" of some fifteen

The Old Academy Building at Yarmouth, Maine



or twenty young men. One was the president of the Commons. With a business-like manner he asked a blessing while the students were yet standing, then all sat down. Sitting on rough benches instead of chairs, we saw before us but little table furniture. There were on the board bottles of molasses, which was used every day, except Sunday, for butter. Loaves of bread were scattered at irregular intervals interspersed with some thin slices of cold meat. We had water for drink and no tea or coffee; these with meats were not allowed at every meal.

“This was my first experience at such a table, and it was indeed the most economic of any, that ever befell me. Soldiers would have complained if they had had such short rations; yet the young men were healthful and fairly

well contented. It was their own choice to be thus frugal. Our mess bill never exceeded \$1.00 per week, and sometimes was as low as eighty cents. We always had both meat and butter on Sundays.”⁶

There was evidently little improvement in the menu, as the students organized a strike against “too much lamb” during Thomas Crowell’s term at Yarmouth.

The only record we have of his studies there is a composition which bears the inscription “Thomas Y. Crowell, No. 3, 1850.” It is written in a clear hand, giving promise of the unusual penmanship which Mr. Crowell afterwards acquired.

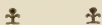
It reads as follows:

⁶ “Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard,” 1907

“Connection between a cheerful performance of known duty in early life and future happiness & success. [*Sic*]

“In order to obtain future happiness and success [*Sic*] we should always perform what we know to be our duty. If we know it to be our duty to perform a thing and do not perform it, we feel as though we had not done right and are not satisfied with ourselves. But on the other hand, if we do perform it we feel as though we had done right and we are happy. Take the case of one who is in the habit of taking liquor; he knows it to be his duty not to take it, but the cravings of his appetite demand it, and at last he becomes the victim of Intemperance, thereby making himself miserable and unhappy for life, while one who resists the temptations and

cheerfully performs that which he knows to be his duty will obtain future happiness and success." [*Sic*]



It is said that Thomas Crowell had expected to go to college, but if so, the plan was evidently not regarded seriously by his family. His course at Yarmouth was cut short by what appeared to be an unusual business opening during vacation-time. His brother Howes had applied for a position with a commission house on Long Wharf, Boston, and had gone there with his mother to see about it. It turned out that Howes was too old for the place, so his mother promptly said: "I have another son at home who is just the right size"—referring to Thomas. So

West Dennis Methodist Episcopal Church
(Built 1834-5. Enlarged 1848)

Man was evidently regarded as



Thomas took the job, and thus began his business career.

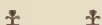
His first place did not turn out well, as in a few months his employers failed. The natural thing for a Cape Cod boy to do, when out of work, was to go to sea. Thomas Crowell's father had followed the sea and his brother Levi, now twenty-three, was captain and owner of a small schooner, the *Tioga*, in which his brother, Howes, had also made several trips. Most of his friends and relatives were seafaring men. So following the example of his ancestors, the boy of about sixteen, out of a job, went to sea. For four years he lived the life of a mariner—scrubbed decks, “slushed” the masts, cooked on occasion, stood watch, furled sails, took his trick at the wheel, painted, and did the

hundred-and-one chores of a sailor. He served first as cabin boy, then before the mast, and finally as second mate.

The young cabin boy took exception to the language used by his captain on the first voyage out, and on reaching port he and a companion deserted the ship and came home in another vessel.

There were short voyages to Philadelphia and Baltimore, and three long ones to distant ports in these four years. On August 3, 1853, at the age of seventeen, with five dollars in his pocket, he sailed from Boston in the ship *Edith Rose* to Australia and ports in India; his wages being thirteen dollars a month. He reached home on September 12, 1854, having been away over thirteen months. Then followed two

voyages to South America. It is unfortunate that no record exists of these interesting voyages. They were similar to those made by R. H. Dana, Jr., a few years earlier, and described so well in his famous book, "Two Years Before the Mast."

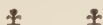


During the last of his sea voyages, Thomas Crowell had risen to the position of second mate, and was in line for still higher duties, but his love of adventure had been satisfied and he had no desire to spend the rest of his life on the sea. So, in 1856, at the age of twenty, he once more sought employment on shore, and finally secured a position with Benjamin Bradley, a Boston bookbinder, at four dollars per week. It was beginning at the bottom again,

with more hard work and long hours. His first tasks were to "take the time" of the hands as they came to work in the morning, sweep out the office, dust, get out the books, and the like. This required him to get to work at 6:30 in the morning without any breakfast, and he returned home to breakfast after the "help" had come in.

Mr. Bradley had begun business as far back as 1834, and was in a sense the pioneer in cloth binding in this country. His first profitable stroke was his work upon the covers of "Six Months In A Convent," a volume which had a remarkable sale for its day. For many years Bradley bound all publications of Ticknor & Fields, Phillips, Sampson & Company, Crosby & Nichols, and other old Boston firms,

and did also a large amount of work for D. Appleton & Company, of New York. Soon after young Crowell entered his employ, hard times developed, and the "boy" was out of work again. It was very difficult to obtain work, and he made application from door to door, one street after another, until finally he obtained a position as book-keeper with Bradley's son-in-law, George A. Mudge, who was in the retail jewelry and silverware business. While working for Mudge, Crowell also kept the books for his former employer, Bradley, and this joint arrangement was continued for some time.



In a few years, his position became more secure and he began to think of

marriage. From childhood he had been devoted to his second cousin, Sylvia Crowell, the belle of West Dennis. The young people had grown up together; attended the same school and church; and were partners at all festive occasions. The courtship was interrupted for a time, and then renewed, the wedding taking place on September 4, 1860, at Gloucester, Massachusetts, where the bride's father, Elisha Crowell, had established a coasting and wholesale fish business. The brief wedding journey of a week or ten days included Springfield, Albany, a trip down the Hudson, and a few days in New York at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, then new and considered the finest of American hotels. The journey ended with a short stay in West Dennis as guests of the bridegroom's mother.

Thomas Y. Crowell and Sylvia B. Crowell, (1869)

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 church; and were partners at all festive
 occasions. The courtship was inter-
 rupted for a time, and then renewed,
 the wedding taking place on September
 2, 1880, at 121 South Arapahoe street.

Miss B. Crowell (1880)

After her marriage, Mrs. Crowell went to live
 at her father's home, 121 South Arapahoe
 street. She was very popular with a
 host of friends, and was a frequent guest of
 the ladies of the Arapahoe street.



This beautiful and unselfish union lasted for fifty-five years. There were three children, all sons, two of whom succeeded their father in the book business which he later established.

The young couple were compelled to start modestly, and boarded for the first two years of their married life, part of the time in South Boston and part of the time in Boston. In 1862 they leased their first house for which they paid a rental of two hundred fifty dollars a year. It was roomy and comfortable for those days, and was located in a good neighborhood of South Boston not far from the old Phillips Church which was founded in 1823. At that time Mr. Crowell's salary amounted to seventeen dollars a week, five dollars of which was paid by Mudge and twelve dollars by Bradley. There were other

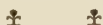
minor sources of income and as living expenses were small, by careful management they laid by a small surplus at the end of each year.

Five years before this time, the young man had received his share of his father's estate. It was a modest sum, consisting of a few shares in various small vessels, some bank stock, and cash, but helped to swell the family income until it disappeared in an unfortunate speculation. The loss itself was a good if painful experience and came early enough to be of value. Mr. Crowell never speculated outside of his business in after life.

During Mr. Crowell's early life, he devoted much time to study and self-improvement. His favorite studies, outside of penmanship and accounting,

were French, phrenology, and shorthand. These occupied most of his spare time. It was his custom for many years, in after life, to use an edition of the Psalms printed in Pitman's shorthand, when conducting family prayers. It was also his habit when a young man to keep a commonplace book, into which he copied with considerable care any item of interest that attracted his attention: poetry, statistics, business principles, and miscellanies. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Earthly Care a Heavenly Discipline" is thus copied out in full. Some other items are as follows: "Compression in Speech and Writing," "Qualities of a Man of Business," "Stephen Girard Says of Advertising," "Irresolution," "National Currency, January 1, 1860."

This thirst for knowledge and love of reading was to stand him in good stead later on.



In 1862, an event occurred which shaped his future business life. This was the death of his employer, Benjamin Bradley, who left a well established and profitable business. Mr. Crowell, who by this time had risen to the post of general manager, was invited by the executors to conduct the business for the benefit of the estate. This he did successfully for three years and, on April 1, 1865, he entered into a five-year partnership with Mrs. Martha M. Bradley, the widow of Benjamin Bradley. By the terms of this agreement Mr. Crowell was to receive a salary of

Thomas Y. Crowell (1863 and 1870)

This thirst for knowledge and
learning was to stand him in good
later on.

§ 4

In 1832, an event occurred which
shaped his future business life. This
was the death of his employer, Benjamin
Hendley, who left a well established
and profitable business. Mr. Croswell,
aided by his uncle and brother, the part of a
limited partnership, was organized to
continue to conduct the business.
The result of this was
successfully for

April 1, 1843, a partnership of three-
year partnership was made between M.
Hendley, the widow of Benjamin Hend-
ley. By the terms of this agreement
Mr. Croswell was to receive a salary of

James K. Croswell (1823-1890)



two thousand five hundred dollars a year, and share equally with Mrs. Bradley in the profits or losses.

Mr. Crowell now had his first opportunity, and he made the most of it. He was able to hold most of his customers and make new ones. Business was good, profits were satisfactory, and at the end of the partnership Mrs. Bradley retired, well satisfied, and sold her interest in the business on easy terms to Mr. Crowell who, in April 1870, began business for himself, in the old quarters at 57 Washington Street, Boston, under his own name, "Thomas Y. Crowell, Successor to Benjamin Bradley."

Not much capital was needed to finance a bookbinding business fifty years ago. All of the folding, pasting,

sewing, backing and casemaking was done by hand. The only machinery found in most shops was used for cutting and stamping. The supplies were hoisted by a rope and tackle, and deliveries were made in a large wheelbarrow. The output of the largest cloth bookbinders scarcely equalled one third of the number turned out by a small modern shop to-day. Nevertheless, the profits of those times were substantial.

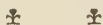
At this time, Mr. Crowell's principal customers were: Fields, Osgood & Company, Gould & Lincoln, The American Unitarian Association, The Universalist Publishing House, H. A. Young & Company, D. Lothrop & Company, Rand, Avery & Frye, and Henry Hoyt.

Two years later, Mr. Crowell bought

a stock interest in the Henry Bill Publishing Company, of Norwich, Connecticut. This proved to be a good investment, as this firm did a considerable business in subscription books, and later on were the fortunate publishers of Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress," of which over one hundred thousand sets were sold, a record sale for those days. Mr. Crowell bound all these and the other publications of the Henry Bill Publishing Company, as long as it remained in business.

Edwin Ginn had, in 1867, started on his phenomenal career as a publisher of text books under the firm name of Ginn Brothers, and being short of capital was having some trouble with his binder. He came to Mr. Crowell, in 1872, who took over his work on satisfactory terms and did his binding

for several years, until Ginn established a bindery of his own.



In 1866, Mr. Crowell moved to Chelsea where he had purchased a small house on Chestnut Street in a block near the Marine Hospital. One of the houses in the same block was occupied by William Haskell who afterwards became the proprietor of the *Boston Herald*. Mr. Crowell took many lonely midnight walks across the dimly lighted Chelsea Bridge from his bindery to his home, as much of his work was done after closing hours.

As business cares increased, he found it desirable to live in Boston; and, in 1872, took a three years' lease of an old but comfortable house at 35 Lynde Street, almost under the shadow of Dr.

Bartol's church on Cambridge Street. Perhaps a stronger reason for the move was his interest in church work, and the inconvenience of attending services from a long distance.

As a young man beginning work with Bradley, he had attended Mount Vernon Church, then located in Ashburton Place on Beacon Hill. He was undoubtedly attracted by the eloquence of its pastor, the Rev. Edward Norris Kirk, then in his prime and perhaps the greatest preacher in Boston at that time. Visitors to the American Chapel in Paris have doubtless noticed there a bust of Dr. Kirk, who was granted a leave of absence to found that church in 1857. Thomas Crowell became a member of Mount Vernon Church on May 2, 1858, and retained his membership for the rest of his life, his activity in

church affairs gradually increasing as the years went on. Another country boy, afterwards to become famous, who attended Mount Vernon Church at this time, was Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist.⁷ Dr. Kirk had great influence with young men, and the Mount Vernon Association of Young Men, which he founded in 1850, must have been a strong attraction to young Crowell with his bent for self-improvement. The Association held regular religious, literary, and social meetings and debates. The members contributed to the *Illuminator*, the magazine of the Association which, however, was not printed. At the literary meetings the efforts of the young men in this direction were read and commented upon, for mutual

⁷ "Life of E. N. Kirk," by D. O. Mears, 1877.

Exterior of Mount Vernon Church
(Built 1843-44)





helpfulness.⁸ The church building, which is still standing, although now owned by Boston University, was severely plain with its Grecian front of gray granite, and its cheerful interior of white paint and mahogany; and the brilliant minister attracted a large and fashionable audience. The dismal chapel located in the basement was used for prayer meetings and social occasions. It was also the gathering-place of the fathers of the church, and echoed to the voices of many men notable in the business and professional life of Boston. Among others in those early days were Deacon Julius A. Palmer, father of George H. Palmer, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard; Deacon Daniel

⁸ "Glimpses of Old Mount Vernon Church," by Alice M. Hawes, 1923.

Safford, builder of the wrought-iron fence around Boston Common, a large part of which has since been removed to make room for traffic; and Deacon John M. Pinkerton, founder of Pinkerton Academy.

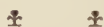
A year before Thomas Crowell removed from Chelsea to Boston, Samuel E. Herrick had come to Boston as assistant pastor of Mount Vernon Church, and later as full pastor. Under his leadership Mr. Crowell became an active worker, as Sunday School superintendent and deacon. In those days the church members constituted the "Church," while the pew owners, whether members of the church or not, constituted the "Society," which was the owner of the church property, received all pew rents and other monies except contributions

for benevolences, and was responsible for the raising of money to pay salaries, upkeep of property, and running expenses. Mr. Crowell was active and liberal in both the society business and church affairs. He enjoyed the work and his contacts with strong men. The names of Alden, Bradford, Cushing, Kimball, Leland, Pinkerton, Tobey, Tyler, Warren, and Woods occupy an honorable place in the history of Mount Vernon Church during the seventies and eighties. The names alone suggest pages from the Colonial and Revolutionary history of New England.

Dr. Herrick, who, during his long and successful pastorate, had no more sincere friend or admirer than Mr. Crowell, was a man of ripe scholarship, a progressive thinker, and a

great book-lover. He received many flattering calls, but gave all of his remaining years to the service of Mount Vernon Church. One series of special Sunday evening services, which attracted wide attention and which particularly interested Mr. Crowell, consisted of carefully thought out addresses on "Some Heretics of Yesterday." In view of recent pulpit utterances, the names of some of these "heretics" have present-day interest. The list was as follows: Tauler, Wiclif, Hus, Savonarola, Latimer, Cranmer, Melancthon, Knox, Calvin, Coligny, William Brewster, Wesley. These addresses attracted large audiences and the Sunday evening service problem was solved for the time being. The Boston publishing house of Houghton Mifflin & Company pub-

lished the sermons in book form, in 1884.



The panic of 1873 temporarily checked Mr. Crowell's prosperity. At this time he had a well established and increasing business. Now several of his customers failed and went out of business, competition increased, and profits declined. One of the unfortunate customers who got into trouble was the firm of Warren & Wyman, of New York, who made a specialty of religious and Sunday School books. They failed in 1875, and in December of that year, Mr. Crowell purchased their plates, bound books, and sheet stock, the whole transaction amounting to less than six thousand dollars. This marked the start of the gradual

evolution of Mr. Crowell's business from the binding of books to the publishing of them—also of his entrance into New York.

Early in the following year (1876) Thomas Y. Crowell started his publishing branch at 744 Broadway, New York, with William W. Wyman, formerly of Warren & Wyman, as manager, and his nephew, L. Howes Crowell, in charge of sales. Both of these faithful men remained in Mr. Crowell's employ until they died, and contributed in no small measure to the success of the new enterprise. In July of this year the first catalogue with the Crowell imprint appeared, comprising eight pages devoted to a description of sixty-one books. None of these pioneer books is in print at the present time.

Specimen of Thomas Y. Crowell's penmanship

...the reading of books to the
...of them—also of his
New York.

Early in the following year (1870)
Thomas W. Crowell started his pub-
lishing office at 74 Broadway, New
York, with William W. Wyman,

Illustrated by J. J. Crowell

...these pio-
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Thomas G. Corwell.

From this time on, Mr. Crowell's heart was turned to publishing, and although he continued to direct the bindery, the details of which were in the hands of his partner and brother-in-law, E. Osborne Crowell, his chief occupation was soon that of book publishing. He came to his new task with no real knowledge of its problems, but he possessed many of the qualifications necessary for success in this difficult business including a love of books, alertness, capacity for detail, and a flair for publicity. Book publishing is not a large industry measured by turn-over, but those engaged in it regard their calling as the most important in the world. From the outset Mr. Crowell delighted in it.

His first notable success in publishing was brought about by his purchase, in 1877, of the plates of fifteen "British Poets," formerly published by Phillips & Sampson. The plates were offered at a very low price, but they were stereos in bad condition, and Mr. Crowell was advised, by those more experienced in publishing, not to purchase them. Nevertheless, he thought he saw an opportunity, and made the purchase, despite the advice of his friends. A lack of experience is sometimes an advantage in a speculative business; at least it proved so in Mr. Crowell's case on several occasions.

He found it necessary, however, to spend many times the original cost of the plates of "British Poets" on re-sets and repairs, before they could be used, and it was the fall of 1877 be-

fore the first announcement appeared. The books as he issued them were well made, low in price, and therefore had a ready sale. By 1880, the number of volumes had been increased to thirty-six. The "Poets" were then printed on tinted paper with a red rule border on every page, illustrations were added, the edges gilded, the boards bevelled, and the covers decorated in gold and ink. Such a *format* would not meet with approval now, but in their day, "Crowell's Red Line Poets" met with great favor. They set the pace, as it were, for many such publications. By 1882 the number of titles had reached forty-five, and from that time on, new styles of binding, and new titles were added year by year. The plates of some of the volumes were worn out by constant printing, and in

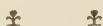
a few cases even a third set of plates was needed. Of course, the sales diminished greatly later on, but it was a very encouraging start for a young publisher.

In 1876, the firm of Fords, Howard & Hulbert had published Bryant's "New Library of Poetry and Song," a revision of the 1871 edition. The book had an enormous sale, and this suggested to Mr. Crowell the possibility of bringing out a competing book. He therefore arranged with Charlotte Fiske Bates, a friend of Longfellow and Whittier, and herself a poet of some reputation, to compile "The Cambridge Book of Poetry and Song," which was published in 1882. The special features of the book were the extracts from contemporary American authors, and the illustra-

tions which were drawn by the leading artists of the day. Some of these men, such as Church, Fredericks, Childe Hassam, Murphy, and Gifford, later achieved a high place among American painters. The "Cambridge Book" was well received, has had a steady sale for over forty years, and is still in demand.

At this time, Mr. Crowell was doing most of the editorial work himself, and frequently burned the midnight oil over manuscripts, advertisements, and announcements. He also undertook the compilation of a volume of poetry from British authors, chronologically arranged with biographical sketches of all the authors. This book, which Mr. Crowell after some thought called "Red Letter Poems of English Men and Women," was published in 1884.

It was a useful collection and sold to the extent of fifty thousand copies.



Perhaps the most brilliant stroke of Mr. Crowell's career was his publication of the works of Tolstoi. The New York *Tribune*, one day in 1885, printed a cable dispatch reporting that a French translation of Tolstoi's "My Religion" had just been published and was making a profound impression. Mr. Crowell chanced to see this item, and immediately cabled to Paris for two copies of the French edition. One of these was placed in the hands of Huntington Smith, editor of the *Literary World*, and a translation was made and published in short order. The publication of this book in America proved a literary event of great magni-

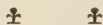
tude. All the literary critics discussed the book which was hailed as a new "Ecce Homo!" The result was, that the imprint of Crowell became known for the first time to thousands of readers.

Encouraged by this success, Mr. Crowell immediately made arrangements for a translation of "Anna Karenina," Tolstoi's greatest work of fiction, and was fortunate in securing for his translator Nathan Haskell Dole, then musical editor of the *Philadelphia Press*. The publication of "Anna Karenina" in 1886 was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm among the critics, W. D. Howells taking the lead. "War and Peace" and other famous books by Tolstoi followed in rapid succession, and lesser Russian authors were added to the list, Miss Isabel F.

Hapgood undertaking the translation of books by Gogol.

Mr. Crowell was the first publisher in any country to realize that a uniform edition of Tolstoi's works would be a profitable undertaking, and this author has proved an important feature of the Crowell list.

As a result of his contact with Mr. Dole, Mr. Crowell invited his versatile translator to become the Crowell editor. Mr. Dole accepted the offer and, until the year 1900, all new publications passed through his hands.



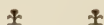
Many of the best books on every list are those suggested to the author by the publisher. In the fall of 1884, Mr. Crowell noticed an article in the *Congregationalist* entitled "Poor Boys

Who Became Famous.” The author was Sarah Knowles Bolton, formerly associate editor of that paper. Mr. Crowell had met her, and wrote her as follows: “We notice you have in this week’s *Congregationalist* an article entitled ‘Poor Boys Who Became Famous.’ It occurs to us that it would be an excellent title for a book, made up of short biographies like those referred to. Can we make arrangements with you to furnish us with material of this kind, enough for a 16mo of 300 to 350 pages, to publish next season?”⁹

Mrs. Bolton fell in with his suggestion and chose twenty-eight persons who had risen from poverty to prominence. She skilfully traced the secret of their success, and pointed out that without

⁹ “Sarah K. Bolton,” edited by her son, C. K. Bolton, 1923.

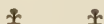
work and will no great things can be achieved. She was also particularly happy in her anecdotes. "Poor Boys Who Became Famous" proved a great and enduring success, and it is still active. It was followed with almost equal success by "Lives of Girls Who Became Famous," "Famous American Authors," "Famous American Statesmen," "Famous Men of Science," and others from Mrs. Bolton's pen.



After the Civil War, interest in labor organizations revived, factories grew in number, and problems of labor attracted increasing attention. There was, however, no good book on the subject of American labor, and Mr. Crowell, who was a diligent reader of magazines and newspapers, thought that a book on this

live topic was needed. Richard T. Ely, then associate professor of political economy at Johns Hopkins University, had become well known by his articles in the *Christian Union* and other magazines, and Mr. Crowell suggested to him that he write a book on American labor. The proposition met with Professor Ely's approval and the book was published in 1886, under the title "The Labor Movement in America." It was highly praised, sold well, and became the first of an important series. It was followed by "Taxation in American States and Cities," "Problems of Today," "Socialism and Social Reform," and "Social Aspects of Christianity." Out of these grew "Crowell's Library of Economics and Politics," by various specialists in their subjects, which was edited by Pro-

fessor Ely. Two of the volumes in this series, Warner's "American Charities," and Wines' "Punishment and Reformation," became "standard" and are still in demand. Dr. Ely, after a while, transferred his allegiance to another house, but the impetus remained, and at a later date Mr. Crowell's successors started a new "Social Science Series" under the able editorship of Professor Seba Eldridge, of the University of Kansas.

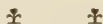


The religious list taken over from Warren & Wyman was enlarged by the addition of other books of a devotional character, and, in 1886, Mr. Crowell published "Silent Times, a book to help in reading the Bible into life," by James R. Miller, pastor

of the Holland Memorial Church in Philadelphia, and editor of the Presbyterian Board of Publication. The book was named by Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer, president of Wellesley College. The title was suggested by the "silent times" of devotion observed morning and evening in her college.

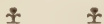
For five years "Silent Times" was only moderately successful, but in 1890 Mr. Crowell improved the style of binding, and, in 1891, brought out "Making the Most of Life" by the same author. This was the beginning of Dr. Miller's nation-wide pulpit. For many years Mr. Crowell published one or two new books by Dr. Miller each year, with increasing sales. They were soon taken up in England, where the sales were even larger than in the United States, and Dr. Miller

became one of the most popular religious writers in the world. The total sales of his forty or more books in the United States and Great Britain amounted to over two million volumes. Dr. Miller often left the task of selecting a title to Mr. Crowell, who gave a good deal of attention to such matters and was usually very happy in his choice.



The Civil War was productive of a large crop of books on war subjects. One of the writers of that period was Warren Lee Goss, who saw active service and was a prisoner of war at Libby, Andersonville and elsewhere. His "Recollections of a Private," which appeared in the *Century Magazine* in 1887, attracted the attention of Lord

Wolseley, who made special mention of Mr. Goss's story in an article in the *North American Review*, for July, 1889. Mr. Crowell was also impressed by the *Century* articles, and arranged with Mr. Goss to write a book for boys on the Civil War. This appeared in 1889 with the title, "Jed—A Boy's Adventures in the Army of '61-'65." The book is considered one of the best war stories ever written for boys. It was accepted as a true picture and is now a classic. Six other books on the Civil War followed, also one on the World War, and one on the Revolution. Mr. Goss passed away in 1925, at ninety, busily engaged upon a new book!



In the early months of 1889, Mr. Crowell took his first long vacation.

For thirty years he had scarcely been away from his work, so that he enjoyed to the full a six weeks' trip with Mrs. Crowell to California. The wonderful vegetation and climate of the Pacific coast made a deep impression upon him, and his letters from Pasadena, Coronado and Santa Barbara were enthusiastic. He also found much to interest him in the historical associations as well as the future possibilities of the places visited.

His summers were usually spent at Swampscott, Massachusetts, on the North Shore, and, after 1889, he made several winter trips to the South, which helped to build up a constitution none too strong. He found special benefit in Florida, Nassau, Cuba, and Bermuda. A long anticipated trip to Eu-

Interior of Mount Vernon Church (1890)

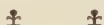
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rope was marred by a painful accident on shipboard.

His home from 1880 to 1895 was at 7 Claremont Park, Boston, where he spent perhaps the happiest years of his life while in his prime. His business was growing rapidly, and he felt, as he expressed it, as though he were driving a pair of spirited horses.



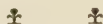
Before the days of international copyright, the news-stands were loaded with cheap, paper reprints of British authors. Most of these were put out by George Munro and John W. Lovell. Mr. Lovell was also a publisher of standard sets and standard 12mos. Mr. Crowell had business dealings with Mr. Lovell on several oc-

casions, and regarded him as a very versatile and aggressive publisher, but somewhat visionary.

The competition on these non-copy-right books was intense, and caused the failure of several well-known firms, so that Mr. Lovell, early in 1890, conceived the idea of a trust, in which all the cheap book concerns in the country were to be merged. Failing in this, Mr. Lovell, backed by H. K. Thurber of Thurber, Whyland & Company, Edward Lange of the Trow Company, and others, organized the United States Book Company with a capital of \$3,250,000, and he induced about twenty publishers to transfer to the new company all that part of their business relating to the publication of low-priced novels, poets, and standard sets.

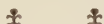
Mr. Crowell refused to sell his "Poets" to the combine, and sent out a notice to that effect. This started a trade war, and prices on lines competing with Mr. Crowell were cut to the bone. Mr. Crowell responded by making plates of Thackeray, George Eliot, Dickens, and Scott. Some of his friends thought that he was in a tight place, and were amazed at his courage. This bold policy, however, brought about a settlement, and in August the United States Book Company turned over to Mr. Crowell all its bound stock and sheets of "Poets," and other competing lines. It was a victory for Mr. Crowell, but the large purchase of merchandise was a heavy load to carry. With the help of some good friends, however, the problem was worked out

successfully, while the United States Book Company met with disaster, and finally disintegrated.



In 1893, Mr. Crowell received a manuscript which attracted very little attention in the office. It was very slight, less than thirty pages, and seemed at first hardly worth publishing in book form; but the title, "What is Worth While," was striking and he decided to try it. The little booklet was given a very tasteful dress, and soon began to sell surprisingly well. The author, Anna R. Brown, afterwards the wife of Professor S. C. Lindsay of Columbia University, had the satisfaction of seeing her address, originally read before the Philadelphia Branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, be-

come one of the best selling books of its kind. This venture was so successful that other booklets were brought out in similar style—and soon the “What is Worth While Series,” included essays of Henry van Dyke, J. R. Miller, Professor George H. Palmer, O. S. Marden, R. W. Trine and other prominent writers. The total sales of this series, which was one of Mr. Crowell’s big successes, ran into millions of volumes.



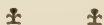
One day in 1894, Mr. Crowell received a manuscript from Dr. Orison S. Marden, then living at 43 Bowdoin Street, Boston. The book was entitled “Pushing to the Front, or Success under Difficulties.” Mr. Crowell recognized its merit and was anxious to publish the manuscript, but Dr. Marden

had also approached Houghton Mifflin & Company, and they finally secured the book, bringing out twelve editions of it the first year. They also published, in 1895, a second book entitled "Architects of Fate." In 1898, however, Dr. Marden gave Mr. Crowell a book entitled "The Secret of Achievement," and soon after that the first two books were transferred to Mr. Crowell who became Dr. Marden's regular publisher thereafter.

The story of Dr. Marden's life is a remarkable one: Born in the backwoods of New Hampshire, an orphan at the age of seven, "bound out," and obliged to make his own way, he worked his way through school and college, law school and medical school. Before he had completed his education, he had become a hotel manager

at a high salary. He put his money into hotels in three states, but the panic of '93, together with fire and drought, ruined him financially. Inspired by a copy of Samuel Smiles's "Self Help," which fell into his hands while a boy, Dr. Marden had been collecting material for many years for a similar book for American boys. This book was "Pushing to the Front," the manuscript of which was destroyed in the fire which burned one of his hotels. At the age of forty-five he started to re-write his book and, choosing literature for his life's work rather than business, declined many flattering offers to re-enter the hotel business. His books, of which there were over forty, had a very wide circulation in almost every country in the world, stimulating millions of young men to

worthy endeavor. In Latin-speaking countries and in Japan, they were exceedingly popular. It has been said that the Japanese success in the war with Russia was due in part to the influence of Dr. Marden's books on the youth of that country. But Dr. Marden's greatest interest was in his magazine, *Success*. This, like his hotels, came to grief, but at the age of seventy he bravely started a new magazine with the old name,—all of which serves as a striking example of the truth of the sub-title of his first book—"Success under Difficulties."

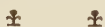


In the closing years of the nineteenth century, the American interest in Browning's poetry was widespread, but no annotated edition of the com-

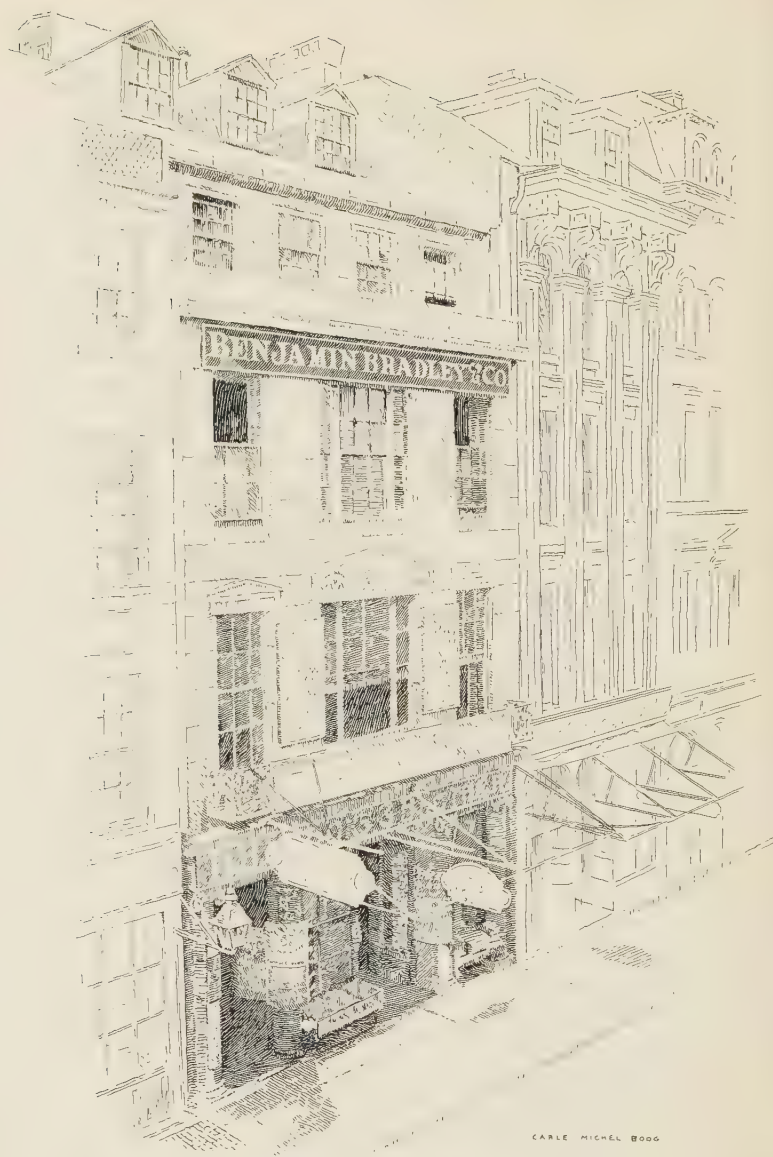
plete works was available. Mr. Crowell was quick to see the need for such an edition. Acting upon the advice of Mr. Dole, he secured as editors Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke, editors of *Poet Lore*, who were entirely competent, and probably the best choice Mr. Crowell could have made. The set, in twelve volumes, was a great success and was highly praised by critics and college professors. The *format* of this set was carefully studied, and the result was perhaps the most satisfactory piece of book-making ever issued by Mr. Crowell. One feature of interest was the title page and cover which were designed by Bertram G. Goodhue, who was then associated with Mr. Cram, the architect. Mr. Goodhue, as is well known, afterwards became one of

America's most celebrated architects, St. Thomas' Church in New York being a typical example of his skill in designing Gothic architecture. He made many other designs for the house of Crowell, and the catalogue cover still in use was designed by him.

Miss Porter and Miss Clarke followed their work on Browning with a set of Shakespeare in forty volumes. It was thoroughly equipped with notes and other editorial helps, and was highly appreciated by students, but received inadequate support from the public, doubtless because of its use of the original Elizabethan spelling of the First Folio Edition, of 1623.



The bindery in Boston and the publishing offices in New York had



57 *Washington Street, Boston* (1870)

changed locations several times since Mr. Crowell had started in business on his own account. The bindery, which was located originally at 57 Washington Street, was moved to 93 Federal Street, and then to 65 Kingston Street. There it was destroyed by the disastrous "Thanksgiving Day Fire" of 1889. The final Boston location was at 100 Purchase Street. The New York offices were first located at 744 Broadway, then at 13 Astor Place, and next at 46 East 14th Street.

The leases in New York and Boston expired early in 1900, and as both locations had been outgrown, it was then proposed to combine the two plants in New York, if a suitable location could be found. The publishing interest had become the more important part of the business, and it was becoming in-

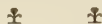
creasingly difficult and expensive to keep up the connection. A satisfactory building was found in the manufacturing district, and the entire business was removed to 426-428 West Broadway, New York, where it remained for the ensuing twenty-five years.

In the year 1900, Mr. Crowell had reached that time in life when one hesitates to break old ties. He had by this time become the senior deacon in Mount Vernon Church, which had moved a few years before to Beacon Street, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue. He had received many expressions of regard from his fellow church members during his long term of service. One which touched him very deeply was a silver loving cup presented to him in 1897 on the com-

pletion of twenty-five years of service as deacon. Naturally, he contemplated with sorrow this parting from his many friends and the scenes of his early struggles and successes. Then, too, he was comfortably settled in a pleasant home at 856 Beacon Street, where he had been living for five years.

Mr. Crowell, however, regarded his business as something more than a money-making machine. He hoped that he had founded an institution that would contribute to the world's store of knowledge, have a share in the moulding of public opinion, and perhaps prove worthy of a long life. These considerations, therefore, outweighed in his mind all questions of personal comfort or preference and made it possible for him to move to

New York with cheerful anticipations.



The next seven years (1900–1906) were very active. Many new enterprises were undertaken and the list of books bearing the Crowell imprint grew rapidly. At this time, sets of standard authors, such as Dickens, Shakespeare, and Balzac, were having an enormous sale, due to new styles of advertising and new methods of selling. Mr. Crowell had at one time over twenty standard sets on his list, each being issued in several styles of binding. His policy always was to get the best editorial equipment for these authors, in the way of notes, introductions, illustrations, and the like; the books were well printed and durably bound, and in consequence the “Crow-

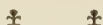
ell Standard Sets" became favorably known all over the United States.

About this time, or soon after, the so-called "New Thought Movement," which, in brief, stood for "might in mind mastery," reached its peak. Perhaps the outstanding writers on this subject were Ralph Waldo Trine, Horatio W. Dresser, and Christian D. Larson. One does not hear so much about it now, but at one time New Thought books were in great demand. Mr. Trine's "In Tune with the Infinite" was one of the best selling books ever published by the house of Crowell.

This was also a period when leather-bound books, especially "ooze" or velvet effects, sold very readily and were an important feature of the Crowell list. A popular line of "Handy Volume Classics" and several lines of

booklets were bound in this and other attractive gift styles.

Before moving to New York, Mr. Crowell had published for Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, of the Broadway Tabernacle, a little book entitled "Quiet Talks with Earnest People." This was followed by many others, two of which—"Things Fundamental," 1903, and "The Character of Jesus," 1908, are standards among religious books, and are regarded as the best output of this notable pulpit orator.



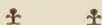
One of Mr. Crowell's last important undertakings was in 1911, when he made a new set of plates in large type of Roget's "Thesaurus," which had been revised by Dr. C. O. S. Mawson, the well-known philologist. This old

book, originally published in England in 1852, had been on Mr. Crowell's list since 1886, when he purchased a set of plates at auction. These plates were replaced in 1892 by the purchase of a better set. Comparatively few people were familiar with the book, and its title may have been too suggestive of some extinct reptile of the Mesozoic Age, but the new edition made many new friends for this invaluable treasury of words and phrases, and during the cross-word puzzle craze it became a "best seller," and still another tribute to the good judgment of Mr. Crowell who had seen its possibilities forty years previously.

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The last years of Mr. Crowell's life were years of readjustment. The

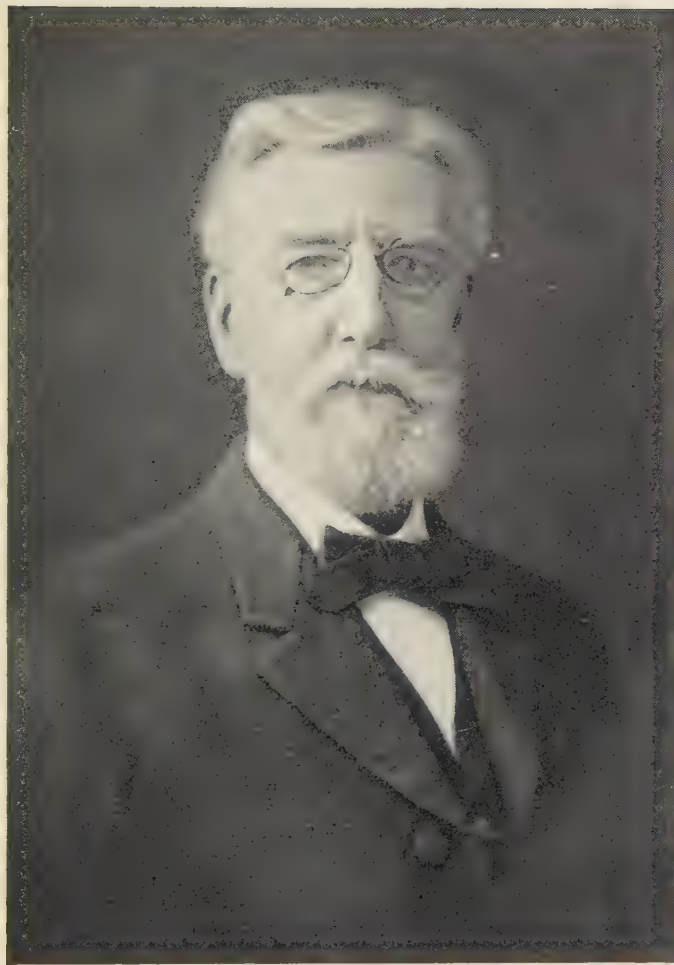
panic of 1907 had been an unpleasant experience, resulting in the collapse of several large customers, and at the same time radical changes took place in the book business. These changing conditions were in time met successfully, but the transition stage was painful and undoubtedly affected Mr. Crowell's health. The infirmities of age overtook him, his visits to his office became infrequent, and early in 1915 ceased altogether. He was able to attend and enjoy the wedding of his granddaughter in May, but his health failed rapidly soon after, and on July 29th, 1915, in his eightieth year, his useful life came to an end.



Thomas Y. Crowell never sought public office. He was, however, greatly



Thomas Y. Crowell (1910)



interested in politics and was a staunch Republican, voting a straight ticket from the election of Lincoln to that of Taft. He was always a great believer in protective tariffs and during Cleveland's administration was much disturbed over the proposal to reduce the tariff on books, while retaining a high duty on the materials used for book manufacture. Mr. Crowell, in company with Mr. H. O. Houghton, made a hurried trip to Washington and brought the matter to the attention of their New England Senators who threw enough weight into the scales to defeat the proposed reduction.

Mr. Crowell was unusually well informed and had clear-cut opinions on the questions of the day. He was a firm believer in Civil Service Reform and felt humiliated by the incompe-

tency of many of our public officials. He never ceased to advocate a government school similar in some ways to that at West Point for the education of United States Government employees in the foreign service. The proposed Walter Hines Page School of International Relations at the Johns Hopkins University approaches what he had in mind.

Mr. Crowell was somewhat conservative in his religious views. He was liberal-minded, however, and tolerant towards the "new theology" of his day, but books like Mrs. Ward's "Robert Elsmere" did not appeal to him. His faith was unshaken to the end.

Enough has been said about Mr. Crowell's business career to show what a large place it occupied in his life. He was very particular about the quality

of his product, both in text and *format*, and never hesitated to use the blue pencil freely on any passages which seemed to him of questionable taste. His desire for perfection in mechanical details sometimes provoked the criticism that he made his books "too good." He had little interest in ephemeral books, light fiction or in *belles lettres*. He preferred solid books and was chiefly interested in those that would inspire or be useful for reference, so that one editor was led to say that he "never issued a book that one is not better for having read."

Mr. Crowell's relations with his employees were unusually cordial, and he had their respect and loyalty to a remarkable degree. On his return from California, in 1889, the bindery employees gave him a gold-headed cane,

which was presented by the oldest workman, one who had been with the concern from the time of Benjamin Bradley. Mr. Crowell was approachable and just, and changes in the personnel of the office and factory forces were not frequent. It was not unusual for employees to remain with him for twenty-five years or more—some measuring out the span of life in the house of Crowell. When, ten years after his death, the firm removed from their West Broadway plant to more modern offices at Twenty-Seventh Street and Fourth Avenue, in the heart of the publishing and uptown business district, the memory of “Mr. T. Y.” was still dominant. At a little dinner of a group of the veterans, a portrait of him, nearly life-size, was presented and now hangs in the office—a visible symbol

of his kindly presence and the spirit which animates the business he founded.

Those who knew him will recall many of his characteristics which this sketch makes no attempt to portray: his humor and philosophy; his patience and fortitude; his high sense of honor, ready sympathy and understanding. He was a loyal friend, whose word was his bond and whose integrity was never questioned. Those who knew him best remember him as a real man—one who “left the world a little better than he found it.”

